EAGLES TURN FOCUS TO PLANS FOR OFFSEASON

METRO BREAKS DOWN WHO SHOULD STAY AND WHO SHOULD WALK. PAGES 22-23

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Monday, January 6, 2014 www.metro.us | t: MetroPhilly | f: MetroPhilly

The pen is mightier

The Mighty Writers. The popular literacy group, which just expanded into West Philadelphia, teaches local kids how to write and communicate effectively through words. **Write what you know.** Using their own skills and story ideas, the kids really expand their dialogue capabilities, said one of the youth coordinators. PAGE 02

Taj Wright, 14, left, and Nile Bayard, 13, rehearse a scene as they practice for the upcoming show, "Acting Absurd," at Mighty Writers in South Philadelphia. / CHARLES MOSTOLLER, METRO

Teens shot at home during Eagles game
PAGE 06

Idris Elba is shaken, not stirred, by rumors
PAGE 11

Mulligan gets mean on the 'Inside'
PAGE 12

Bumming out is so 2013, so get happy!
PAGE 16

1 NEWS

Top 3

What's trending at Metro.us

1 'There will be no 'Bear Rocknroll' for Kate Winslet'

2 'VIDEO: Greyhound wears Batman pajamas while playing in snow'

3 'Is it possible to have two penises? Science and Reddit say yes'

Local Tweet

"I'm not upset that the Eagles lost. It's just upsetting that I can't watch this team for another 8 months. Great things going forward"

Amen, @JClay05.

Where writers and kids are really superheroes

Digging in. The 5-year-old Mighty Writers program expanded to West Philly this September, and is still growing.

Workshop leader David Terruso leads some warm-up exercises before practice for the upcoming show, "Acting Absurd," at Mighty Writers in South Philadelphia. / CHARLES MOSTOLLER, METRO

A popular local writing program is all about helping young people find their voices.

"Kids in Philadelphia are walking around with these incredible stories in their heads [from] just being in the city," said Mighty Writers director Tim Whitaker. "It's just a matter of showing them how to let it out."

It's been five years since Whitaker, a veteran Philly journalist, started the Mighty Writers program. And in that short time, it's expanded to include 2,200 students and 300 volunteer teachers. There's now a waiting list for the after-school program, which 50 kids attend each day.

It all arises from the unique approach at Mighty Writers, which draws in new students via word of mouth who "heard that it's cool," as Whitaker put it.

Comic book writing classes, weekly writing workshops taught by professional writers and SAT prep are offered at Mighty Writers, all in small class environments.

"It's about the intellectual skills, dialoguing capabilities, the confidence to agree to disagree without snapping at each other," said youth coordinator James Owk, 31. "There's not 35 rambunctious kids, it's just 10 people."

Owk said he gets teens to participate by asking them to deeply read into books such as James McBride's novel "The Color of Water," James Loewen's historical "Lies My Teacher Told Me" and Jay Z's memoir "Decoded."

The walls at Mighty Writers South are covered with pictures of superheroes like Spider-Man side by side with photographs of writers such as Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Ralph Ellison, Jamaica Kincaid and Angela Davis.

In September, Mighty Writers West opened up at 39th Street and Lancaster Avenue. With its headquarters at 15th and Christian streets, they've already got South Philly covered.

Whitaker said the next target for expansion is North Philadelphia, and then more microcenters — smaller locations that will attract locals.

At all the centers, the strategy is the same: getting kids to think and write clearly.

"It's all about building their self-esteem," Whitaker said. "Once they get a footing, you see their personalities start to change."

SAM NEWHOUSE
sam.newhouse@metro.us

Mighty writing

Mighty Writers currently has 300 volunteer teachers, 2,200 students and three locations — all of which are growing.

Locations:

- Mighty Writers South: 1501 Christian St.
- Mighty Writers South Street: 1537 South St.
- Mighty Writers West: 39th Street and Lancaster Avenue
- New volunteers can volunteer weekly, daily or just once.

Quoted

"I get my homework incorrect when it comes to math, history and science. I don't ask my parents for help ... instead I created the Homework Robot."

Story by Mighty Writer Kayla Brown

Sworn in. Controller, district attorney will be inaugurated today

Philadelphia District Attorney Seth Williams, City Controller Alan Butkovitz and 22 newly elected judges will be sworn in today in a special inauguration ceremony at the Academy of Music.

In November, Butkovitz won with more than 82 percent of the vote and Williams with more than 80 percent.

Participants will include Mayor Michael Nutter, City Councilman Curtis Jones Jr., Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania Ronald D. Castille and more. The Philadelphia Boys Choir and Philadelphia Police & Fire Color Guard are scheduled to perform. METRO

Shooting

Man shot and killed Sunday in Olney

A 23-year-old man was shot and killed Sunday about 3:30 p.m. while sitting on the front porch of his Olney home, police said.

The man was shot in the head and torso at his home, at the 4900 block of North Franklin Street, by an unknown assailant. METRO

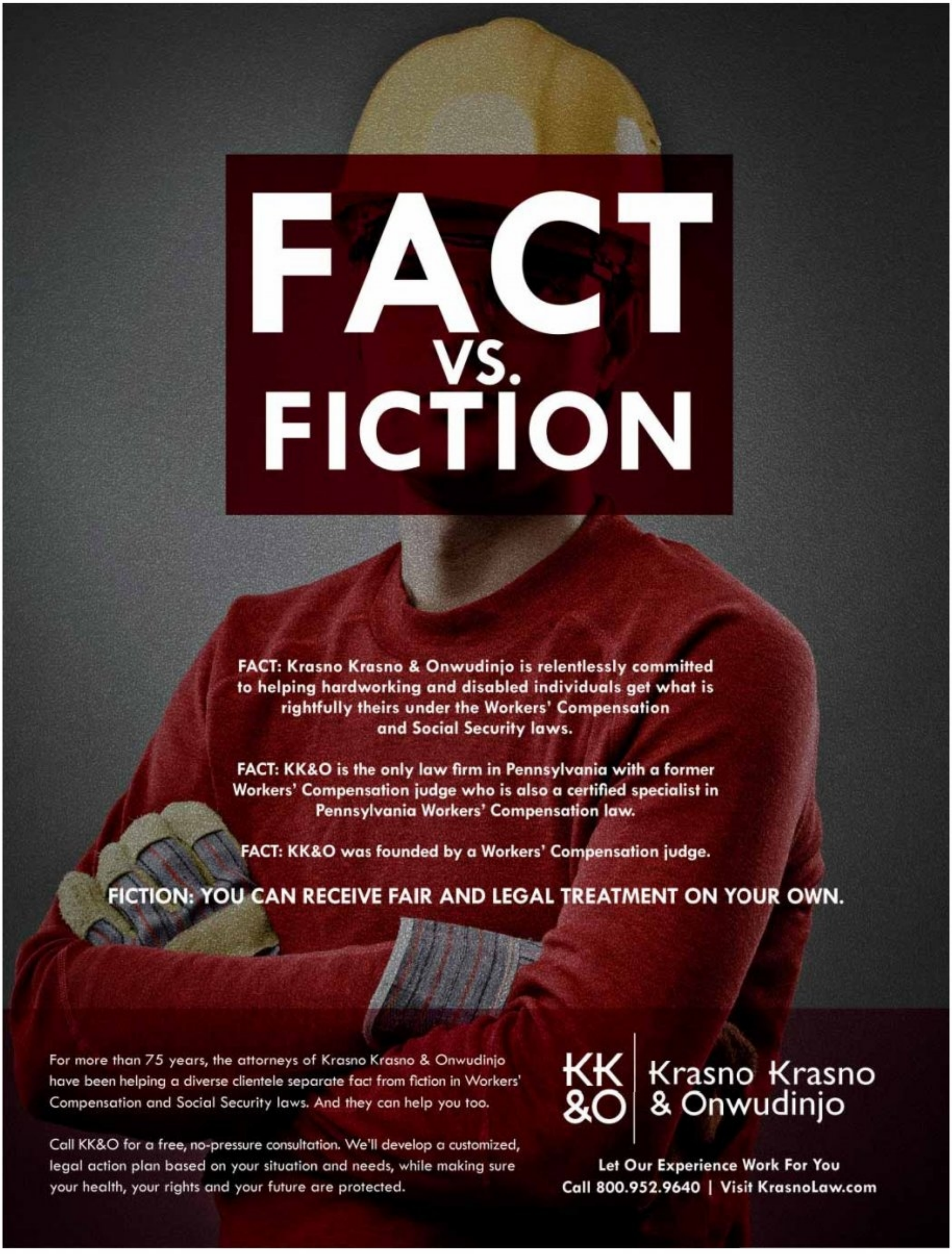
Out on bail

Status hearing today for William Lynn

Days after leaving state prison in Wayne County, Msgr. William Lynn is scheduled to return to court today for a status hearing. Lynn was convicted in 2012 of child endangerment, but an appeals court ruled the law didn't apply to supervisors.

Archbishop Charles Chaput said the church paid Lynn's bail in a letter Friday. METRO

Msgr. William Lynn
FILE PHOTO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PHILLY'S LOW-TAX ZONE PROGRAM NEEDS UPDATING

Tax-free zones appear to be gaining momentum in major cities in America, with top politicians in both parties championing the idea as the surest way for cities to revitalize downtrodden areas.

Yet, as other cities run with the idea, a majority of Philadelphia's own low-tax zones just expired.

In New York, Democratic Gov. Andrew Cuomo launched Start-Up NY, a program designed to give businesses tax-free status for 10 years. The program is the boldest of its kind, with no income, sales, corporate or property taxes if businesses relocate or start up in specified areas around college campuses in the state.

"In a tax-free environment, no one can match what New York has to offer," Cuomo said at the press conference.

Quoted

It's clear the Keystone Opportunity Zones work, but the program needs to be updated.

It was a smart move by Cuomo. It's my guess that he made a New Year's resolution to create economic growth, with a focus on long-term expansion.

A similar idea is buzzing around the bankrupt city of Detroit. Sen. Rand Paul, a Republican from Kentucky, unveiled his bill for "economic freedom zones" across America at the Detroit Economic Club.

"This bill will lower personal and corporate taxes in Detroit to 5 percent," Paul said during his speech, which aired on C-SPAN. Paul, a presidential hopeful, pitched the plan as a nationwide alternative to unpopular bailouts.

Paul's plan would not be a magic bullet that saves Detroit from years of bad policy that led to its bankruptcy, but it would be a good start that reinvigorates business.

How does Philadelphia compare?

A majority of Pennsylvania's own low-tax zones, called Keystone Opportunity Zones, are located in Philadelphia and expired last week. The program is more complex and less attractive than the newly created New York version.

It was founded in 1999 with a similar mission as the others — spurring economic growth in areas that needed it most. And it appears to have done just that.

The Harrah's casino in Chester was built in a Keystone Opportunity Zone. The casino has a value of $218 million and employs 1,672 people, according to the Philadelphia Inquirer.

A 2010 review of the program by the state of Pennsylvania claims that it has created about 8,000 full-time jobs in Philadelphia. It's clear the Keystone Opportunity Zones work, but the program needs to be updated. It needs more teeth and a leader willing to expand it in Philadelphia if the area will continue to compete with New York.

Deliberations

Jury returns on charter founder's case

Fresh off a three-week holiday break and acquitting two co-defendants, the jury in the federal trial of Dorothy June Brown returns to continue deliberations today.

Brown, who founded Ad Prima, Laboratory and Planet Abacus charter schools, is charged with embezzling $6.7 million by collecting separate salaries from the various schools. Brown resigned after the law changed to forbid founders from serving as CEOs.

Brown's defense attorneys presented evidence that students at her schools dramatically outperformed peer charters and Philadelphia public schools. She faces up to 20 years in prison.

SAM NEWHOUSE

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David J. Perri, P.E., Acting Commissioner

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Shooting. Teen boy and girl shot at home watching Eagles game

While watching the Eagles playoff game in their Southwest Philadelphia home Sunday night, a 13-year-old boy and a 15-year-old girl were shot, police said.

Police said an 18-year-old man knocked on the front door of the home, on the 1500 block of South 58th Street, and then opened fire when the teenagers answered. Both were shot in their legs and reportedly in stable condition at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia.

NBC 10 reported that the boy and girl were watching the game along with their older brother and friend. Police told the station that the parents were out of town and the older brother had been babysitting.

The man, who wore a ski mask, knocked on the door shortly before 11 p.m., NBC reported. When the boy and girl answered the door, the man opened fire and then fled the scene.

NBC reported that a semi-automatic handgun was found in a bag few blocks from the scene on the side of the road.

Police said the 18-year-old suspect is in custody, but no charges have been filed as of press time.

TOMMY ROWAN

Details

Police offered additional information:

- Police said the preliminary investigation revealed the shooting was accidental, however interviews are still being conducted and the investigation is ongoing.

Pint-size shopping

Yasmeen Hussain helps her daughter Sophia, 3, check out in the Littlest ShopRite exhibit at the Please Touch Museum. The miniature grocery store reopened Sunday with new, interactive features. / CHARLES MOSTOLLER, METRO

Road safety. Crashes up during New Year's, down over Christmas

Crashes and injuries over the New Year holiday increased this year, while incidents over the Christmas holiday decreased, state police reported.

From New Year's Eve through Jan. 2, Pennsylvania State Police reported investigating 836 crashes, in which 146 people were injured and one was killed. Statistics showed 36 involved alcohol.

Last year, one person was killed and 86 were injured in 377 crashes during the same holiday period, statistics show.

From Christmas Eve through Dec. 26, state police investigated 900 crashes, which resulted in 255 injuries and eight deaths.

During last year's Christmas holiday, seven people were killed and 315 others were injured in 1,336 crashes investigated by state police, statistics show. METRO

Northeast

Main break leaves 50 without water

Another water main broke in the Northeast on Sunday and left about 50 customers without water, reports say.

According to reports, the 6-inch break was reported about 9 a.m. on the 2000 block of Anchor Street in the Frankford.

Cold temperatures were cited as a culprit. METRO

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NSA leaks. Sen. Paul wants light punishment for Edward Snowden

The public debate over the fate of former National Security Agency contractor Edward Snowden intensified on Sunday with conservative Sen. Rand Paul calling for a light prison term as punishment for Snowden's disclosure of information on government surveillance programs.

Paul, a Republican, said in an interview on ABC's "This Week" that Snowden does not deserve the death penalty or life in prison for the leaks, which have rattled the U.S. intelligence community, not to mention an American public that had been unaware of the extent of NSA data collection.

Instead, Paul spoke favorably of "some penalty of a few years in prison" if Snowden were to return to the United States. REUTERS

Recovery

New schools to open in Joplin after tornado

Three new schools will open in Joplin, Mo., this week, the latest step in the town's recovery from a devastating 2011 tornado that killed 161 people and destroyed 8,000 buildings.

The tornado that hit Joplin on May 22, 2011, was the single deadliest in the United States since records were first kept in 1950, according to federal agencies that track storm impacts. REUTERS

'Life-threatening' cold bites Midwest

Officials at the Packers' Lambeau Field promised fans two free hot cocoa or coffee drinks during the game, ESPN reported. / GETTY IMAGES

Expert warnings. In weather this cold, frostbite can set in on uncovered skin in a matter of minutes.

Residents of the Midwestern United States on Sunday braced for the coldest weather in two decades, temperatures that forecasters warned would be life-threatening.

Icy conditions snarled travel across the region and thousands of flights were canceled or delayed, some officials preemptively closed schools and a plane skidded off a runway into snow at New York's JFK airport days after the Northeast was hammered by the first winter storm of the season.

"The coldest temperatures in almost two decades will spread into the northern and central U.S. today behind an arctic cold front," the National Weather Service said in an advisory posted on its website on Sunday. "Combined with gusty winds, these temperatures will result in life-threatening wind chill values as low as 60 degrees below zero [Fahrenheit]."

But fans of the NFL's Green Bay Packers vowed to brave the weather to see a playoff matchup that could stand as one of the coldest games in league history. REUTERS

Coldest

-36 F

The coldest temperature reported in the lower 48 states on Sunday was -36 F in Crane Lake, Minn., according to the National Weather Service.

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Turning 50

Obama's birthday gift to wife: Time alone in Hawaii

President Barack Obama is going to give his wife the birthday present that many parents can only dream of: time off, alone, without the children.

The White House said on Saturday first lady Michelle Obama would stay in Hawaii, where the family has been on vacation for the last two weeks, rather than return home with her husband and their two girls.

REUTERS

MICHELLE OBAMA
GETTY IMAGES

Unemployment

Obama to speak on benefits extension

President Barack Obama will ratchet up his administration's push for an extension of emergency unemployment benefits on Tuesday with an event at the White House attended by people whose benefits have expired.

Obama, who on Saturday returned from vacation in Hawaii, and his advisers have been pressing Congress to extend the federal aid to help out-of-work Americans and avoid damage to the economy. REUTERS

PRESIDENT OBAMA
GETTY IMAGES

Romney accepts apology for segment on his grandchild

Kids. He said public figures are fair targets for criticism, "but children — that's beyond the line."

Former U.S. Republican presidential candidate Mitt Romney said on Sunday he is ready to "move on" and has forgiven MSNBC television host Melissa Harris-Perry for a segment that joked about his adopted African-American grandson.

"They apologized for it, and that's all you can ask for," Romney said on "Fox News Sunday." He said Harris-Perry's apology "was clearly heartfelt, and we accept that."

The comments from the 2012 presidential nominee and former Massachusetts governor were his first about Harris-Perry's emotional on-air apology and explanation on Saturday about the controversial segment.

Last week, a segment appeared on MSNBC that asked a panel to humorously caption a photo from the past year. One of the photos was of Romney holding his adopted African-American grandson alongside his wife, Ann, and other grandchildren.

Actress Pia Glenn sang "one of these things is not like the others," and comedian Dean Obeidallah joked that the photo "really sums up the diversity of the Republican Party."

Harris-Perry, who is African-American and a political science professor at Tulane University, is the third MSNBC host to apologize for insensitive comments in the past two months.

MSNBC is owned by Comcast Corp.

REUTERS

MSNBC television host Melissa Harris-Perry joked about Romney's African-American adopted grandson. / GETTY IMAGES

Quoted

"I recognize people make mistakes. The folks at MSNBC made a big mistake. ... I'm going to move on from that." Romney

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Shawn Berk
North Philadelphia | 24

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Kerry: US can fight al Qaeda in Iraq without our troops

Anbar. Iraqi troops and allied tribesmen are trying to retake the province.

Armed tribesmen and Iraqi police sit in a car as clashes rage on in the Iraqi city of Ramadi, west of Baghdad. / GETTY IMAGES

The United States will support the Iraqi government and tribes fighting al Qaeda-linked Sunni Muslim militants in Anbar province but will not send U.S. troops back to Iraq, U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry said on Sunday.

Islamist militants linked to al Qaeda and tribal fighters have taken control of Ramadi and Falluja, the main cities in the Sunni Muslim-dominated province of Anbar, which adjoins Syria, in a serious challenge to the Shi'ite-led government's authority.

Speaking to reporters in Jerusalem, Kerry said the United States was concerned about events in Anbar, which was the heart of the anti-U.S. rebellion after the United States' invasion of Iraq in 2003.

While pledging to help Iraqi Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki's government, he made clear there was no question of U.S. troops returning to Iraq. The United States withdrew its troops from Iraq in 2011 after failing to reach an agreement with Maliki's government on a continuing presence.

Kerry declined to provide details on what the United States might do to assist Maliki, whom Washington has repeatedly urged to share power with the Sunni minority — in part to prevent a renewed Sunni insurgency against the central government. REUTERS

Quoted

"This is a fight that belongs to the Iraqis. ... We're not contemplating putting boots on the ground. This is their fight, but we're going to help them in their fight." Kerry

Middle East

Kerry says Israel and Palestinians progressing on peace 'puzzle'

U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry said on Sunday the Israelis and Palestinians were making some progress in peace talks, though there was still a chance no accord would be reached.

Speaking before he flew to Jordan and Saudi Arabia to brief their rulers about his 10th visit to the region to see Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, Kerry said both sides had a sharper idea of the compromises needed to secure an agreement.

"This has been a productive couple of days," Kerry told reporters. "We have had very positive — but I have to say very serious, very intensive — conversations." REUTERS

Face-to-face

Kerry says South Sudan peace talks 'must be serious'

Secretary of State John Kerry voiced support for direct South Sudanese peace talks set to begin on Sunday and cautioned against any use of force to try to gain the upper hand.

The government of South Sudan and representatives of rebel forces met on Saturday evening in Ethiopia for the formal inauguration of peace talks, part of the diplomatic effort to halt weeks of fighting in the young nation.

More substantive, face-to-face bargaining was expected on Sunday. REUTERS

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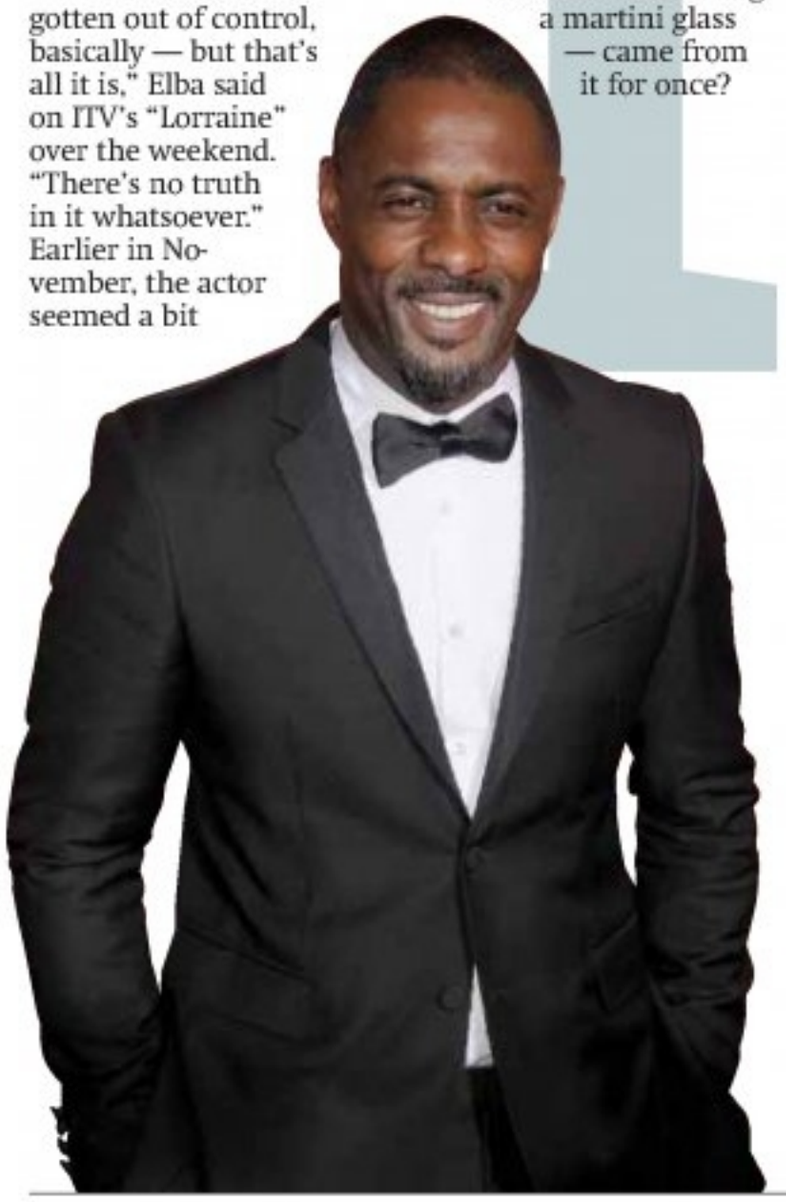
Will Elba be the next James Bond?

This rumor has already been slightly refuted by the man himself, but it's just so juicy I couldn't help but get on the bandwagon: The Internet is trying to make Idris Elba the next James Bond.

A fan group called We Want Idris Elba for James Bond is going so strong (and makes so much sense) that Elba is being asked in interviews if it could possibly happen.

"It's a rumor that's gotten out of control, basically — but that's all it is," Elba said on ITV's "Lorraine" over the weekend. "There's no truth in it whatsoever." Earlier in November, the actor seemed a bit more open to the suggestion. "If I was ever to get offered that role, that would be the will of a nation," Elba told HuffPost Entertainment.

The Internet makes so many terrible things happen (Rebecca Black, "Snakes on a Plane," "Mega Shark Versus Giant Octopus"). Wouldn't it be nice if something amazing and sexy — and that would be Idris Elba in a bow tie and holding a martini glass — came from it for once?



See more at www.metro.us

ALL PHOTOS GETTY IMAGES

Kiss! Kiss! Kiss! (Or hide that kiss. Whatever.)

Ashton Kutcher and girlfriend Mila Kunis slyly smooched for the kiss cam while sitting courtside at a Lakers game in L.A. on Friday. There are reports that Kunis has also been hiding a Kutcher fetus, but so far there has been no confirmation of the pregnancy rumors.

Too raunchy for mom

Maybe all pop stars should be orphans. Orphans, as we know from Broadway, are great at singing and dancing, and free to become international sex symbols without straining their relationships with their moms, which is a problem that Beyonce faces.

Queen Bey has always straddled the line between sex symbol and quasi-feminist first lady of pop. But apparently even she gets uncomfortable sometimes.

Case in point: Her song "Partition," which includes raunchy lyrics like "Driver, roll up the partition please, I don't need you seeing 'Yonce on her knees."

"I was so embarrassed after I recorded the song because I'm just talking s—," Beyonce says in her YouTube documentary "Liberation." "I'm like, 'I can't play this for my husband!' I still haven't played it for my mom. She's going to be very mad at me."

THE WORD

Dorothy Robinson takes on the world of gossip.

DOROTHY ROBINSON
@dorothyatmetro
dorothy.robinson@metro.us

2 CULTURE

Twitter feed

We check in with some of Hollywood's biggest names to see what they've been up to — in their own words, in 140 characters or fewer.

Elizabeth Hurley is off to a bad start, Lena Dunham sounds smart, and Mindy Kaling should get off Twitter.

@ElizabethHurley
About to go on a 8km toboggan ride. Help....

@lenadunham
New hobby: skimming Psychology Today at the airport then starting all sentences with "I read a study that said..."

@mindykaling
You know it's time to put away your phone when you're like: hm, what's the worst thing I could tweet that would end my career?

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From Gatsby to Greenwich

Interview. Actress Carey Mulligan was nervous to sing in front of pros for "Inside Llewyn Davis."

Carey Mulligan was coming from shooting "The Great Gatsby" when she arrived on set for Joel and Ethan Coen's "Inside Llewyn Davis," another film about New York City, this one set in the 1960s Village folk scene. "I had spent six months wearing very pretty dresses and spending lots of time in hair and makeup and wearing lots of jewelry," she recalls. "When I came onto the Coen brothers' film, I wore a big black wig and marched around being mean to everyone. It was quite freeing."

See more at www.metro.us

In the film, Mulligan plays a folk singer in a Peter, Paul & Mary-esque trio, along with her husband (Justin Timberlake). She once had a fling with the titular brooding musician (Oscar Isaac), and it went so terribly she speaks to him solely in insults. "[The Coens] wanted to drive me to be meaner and harsher and more brutal and swear more. For some reason they found that funny."

Like the Coens' "O Brother, Where Art Thou?" and "The Ladykillers," music plays a large part in "Inside Llewyn Davis." Mulligan spent a lot of time with the music producer, T-Bone Burnett, to get into the vibe. It also required her to once again sing, as she did in "Shame."

"I sang at school, like everyone else," she recalls. "It's always nerve-wracking. It was really, really scary on 'Shame' for the first take, because it was focused solely on my voice, and it was live. [Director Steve McQueen] wanted to do the whole thing without cutting. You always hope they can cut around it." Singing here was more lighthearted, but it still had its intensity. "I was nervous to sing in front of Justin and T-Bone, but they couldn't have been nicer about the whole thing."

The Coens try to stay in the shadows, creating this mystique around them as eccentric brothers sharing the same brain. Anyone who's seen them speak, however, knows they're more approachable than that (if not quite normal). "I knew their work, but I had no idea who they were or what kind of people they were," she says. But she wound up loving them instantly. "They're so relaxed. There's nothing pretentious about them. We were doing a Q-and-A in London and someone asked something like, 'How do you do it? Walk us through your process.' And Ethan was like, 'Oh man, I don't know. We watch the movie and it's all f—ed up, and then we just un-f— it.' They're not going to talk about the magic of their genius."

Mulligan says they don't just run the camera and figure it out in editing. "They don't shoot coverage. They just shoot what they're going to use. They've already edited the film before they made it," she says. "They know the story so well. They know exactly what will be on screen. They're confident and calm, and that gives everyone the confidence to play around and try things."

Carey Mulligan plays a terminally angry folk singer in the Coen brothers' "Inside Llewyn Davis." / WIREIMAGE

Carey on Coens

Watching herself

Unlike most of her films, which she watches only once, Mulligan has seen "Inside Llewyn Davis" thrice. "I thought it was so brave the way it was paced. They know the audience wants to hear the whole song and doesn't want to be cut out of it," she says. "I thought it was really beautiful the first time, then the second time I thought it was really hilarious. I've had a different experience each time."

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Also new

'The Wicker Man': The Final Cut

Hopefully the stink from the laughable Nicolas Cage-Neil LaBute remake of this 1973 English cult object has dissipated, leaving you free to realize how weird it is. Robin Hardy's horror thriller (and sometimes musical) finds a detective snooping on an island populated by a backwards religious sect, fending off Christopher Lee and a naked Britt Ekland before the shock ending arrives.

'Duck Dynasty': Season Four

Great timing! This set will no doubt line the already bursting-at-the-seams pockets of a homophobe and racist. On the bright side, maybe Phil Robertson will use the cash to buy a better education.

THE FINAL FILMS OF ONE OF INDIA'S GREATS

'Late Ray'

The Criterion Collection
$44.95

Bollywood has long been all that most Westerners know of Indian cinema — that and perhaps the work of Satyajit Ray, the nation's most esteemed filmmaker. A renaissance man who also wrote books and music, including the scores to many of his films, Ray is best known for his earlier, intimate studies of Bengali life, including "The Apu Trilogy." Less talked about are the latter-day works before his 1992 death, including the three collected in the Criterion Collection's box "Late Ray."

All three are films by a lifelong humanist who only became more fascinated with people the older he got. Rabindranath Tagore's 1916 novel "The Home and the World" is one he wanted to adapt early in his career, but didn't get around to it till the 1980s. That was a good thing, he admitted, as he was by then mature enough to deal with the intellectual battle between a progressive landlord (Victor Banerjee, of "A Passage to India") and a fiery revolutionary (Ray regular Soumitra Chatterjee). Caught in between is the former's wife (Swatilekha Sengupta), who recognizes that neither is fully right and finds herself, like Ray, swinging between the two.

Ray's own take on the tussle could be summed up as "it's complicated." That sentiment extends to the set's other films: a reimagining of Henrik Ibsen's "An Enemy of the People" for modern-day Bengal; and his 1991 swan song "The Stranger," about a middle-class family forced to put up a mysterious, charming relative (Utpal Dutt) who they suspect may be an impostor. Ray, then in his 60s, suffered his first heart attack while making "The Home and the World," thus forcing him to take things easy. But while his last films are visually restricted and heavy on talk — a shock, given his lyrical and rapturous early works — the ideas and his understanding and love for humanity are boundless.

DISC JOCKEY
MATT PRIGGE
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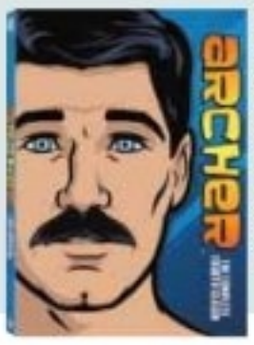
Swatilekha Sengupta plays a wife caught between two men in Satyajit Ray's "The Home and the World." / THE CRITERION COLLECTION

For the love of 'staches

'Archer': The Complete Season Four

The other unspeakably brilliant animated comedy with a lead voice by H. Jon Benjamin, this FX spy romp found worlds colliding in its previous season. There's some crossover with "Bob's Burgers," plus a guest voice from another culinary genius, Anthony Bourdain.



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A princess and her suitor mingle in the unstoppable hit "Frozen."
DISNEY

Box office. Everyone's still seeing 'Frozen' and 'The Hobbit'

Disney's animated fairy tale "Frozen" took hold of first place on movie charts in North America for the first weekend of 2014, knocking three-time champion "The Hobbit: The Desolation of Smaug" down to the No. 3 spot.

Second place went to the new horror movie "Paranormal Activity: The Marked Ones," a spinoff of the hit low-budget "Paranormal Activity" franchise.

"Frozen," which opened six weeks ago on the eve of the long Thanksgiving holiday weekend in November, collected $20.7 million in ticket sales to claim the weekend box office crown ahead of "The Marked Ones," which earned $18.2 million from Friday through Sunday, according to estimates from Rentrak.

"Frozen" is nearing a $300 million domestic total and has collected $640 million in global ticket sales, making it the second highest-grossing Disney Animation release of all time behind only "The Lion King," Disney said. Rounding out the charts is director Martin Scorsese's "The Wolf of Wall Street," which stars Leonardo DiCaprio in the biographical story of a drug-snorting Wall Street scam artist, took the No. 4 spot with $13.4 million.

Fifth place went to 1970s crime caper "American Hustle." The critically praised film stars Christian Bale, Amy Adams, Bradley Cooper and Jennifer Lawrence in a story loosely based on a corruption scandal, and took in $13.2 million.

See more at www.metro.us

TV watch list

REALITY

'Vanderpump Rules'

The staff go to Cabo so they can get drunk and slur nonsensical accusations at each other in a tropical locale. These kids (ha, actually we're pretty sure they're all, like, 30) should watch an episode of "Real Housewives of Beverly Hills" sometime to catch a glimpse of their very-near-future selves. Same drama, more plastic surgery. **9 P.M., BRAVO**

REALITY

'The Bachelor'

In the 18th season of this reality show in which desperate women compete (read: get drunk, cry, catfight) for the love of some random dude, "Bachelorette" loser Juan Pablo Galavis has his pick of 27 ladies. The contestants include a hippie, a salsa dancer and a pregnant woman. How will he choose?! **SEASON PREMIERE, 8 P.M., ABC**
ALEXANDRA CAVALLO

Bravo knows drama, with "Vanderpump Rules." / BRAVO

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Send in the clowns

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Quoted
"I've become addicted to the high-wire act of improvisation — working with an audience and audience suggestions"
Braithwaite
Tony Braithwaite and Jennifer Childs improvise in "Let's Pretend We're Famous." / MARK GARVIN

Tony Braithwaite and Jennifer Childs are self-confessed comedy nerds.

The local actors can recite bits from obscure vaudeville acts, Woody Allen films, Nichols and May skits, George Burns monologues and plenty more — verbatim.

Over the last 13 years they have collaborated on more than a dozen salutes to their favorite comedians. But their most recent cabaret-style send-ups, including "Let's Pretend We're Famous," at Act II Playhouse starting tomorrow, have featured more original material. The show originally premiered in 2012, but — as with almost every endeavor by this pair — the material is constantly evolving.

"I've become addicted to the high-wire act of improvisation — working with an audience and audience suggestions," says Braithwaite from his office at Act II, where he's the artistic director. "There's nothing as exciting as that. So, for me, anything that has that element, you can pretty much convince me to do it."

If you go

'Let's Pretend We're Famous'

Jan. 7-26
Act II Playhouse
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www.act2.org

And "Famous" is perhaps the most improvisation-heavy piece the pair has created to date, including a bit that takes an audience member from discovery, to stardom, to fame, to failure, to rehab and, finally, to the big comeback, all in 15 minutes.

While the show isn't explicitly personal, the material certainly speaks to the baser instincts of any actor. Braithwaite moved to Philadelphia in the mid '90s after a short stint in L.A., where his acute bout of fame-lust was almost completely extinguished.

"I think any actor that says they didn't ever want to be famous at any point is probably lying. But ultimately most of us come to realize that it's a shallow and fleeting kind of a desire," he explains. "One of the things you understand as a regional theater actor is that fame isn't going to be in the cards, so you put your energy elsewhere. But you can still laugh at past ambitions."

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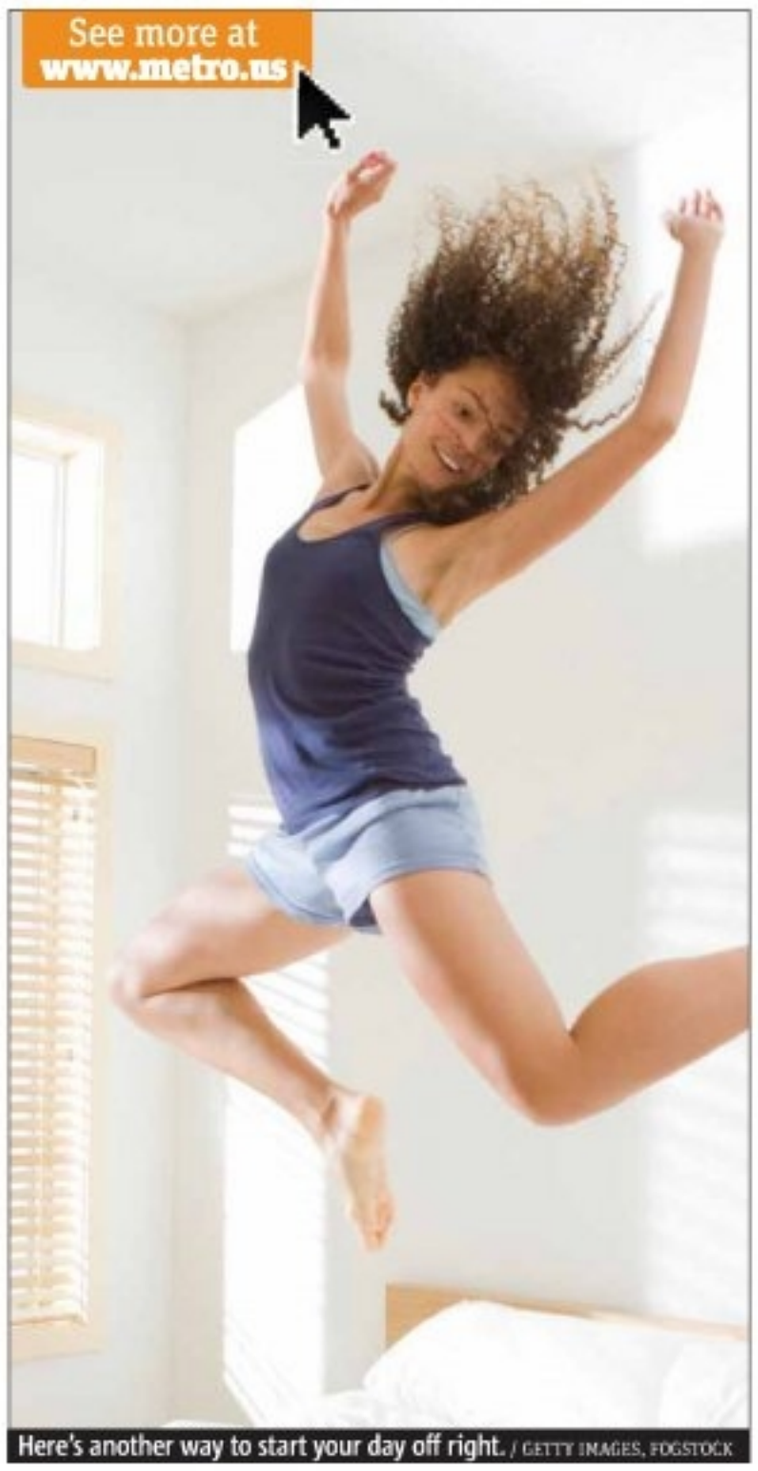
HOW TO BE HAPPIER IN 2014



Here's another way to start your day off right. / GETTY IMAGES, FOGSTOCK

How long have you been living a life that's almost — but not quite — the one you dream about? So many of us spend years (or decades) longing to live a more fulfilling, exciting and authentic life. But old patterns and fearful beliefs hold us back.

It's time to stop dancing around the perimeter of the person you are here to be. Dive in fully and completely! Begin the new year with the right attitude, energy and enthusiasm. Use these five tips to get started.

Say nice things to yourself: You're the only one listening

Sometimes the biggest bully you know is you. This new year, become aware of the unkind ways you speak to yourself. Every thought is an affirmation, either supporting you or taking you down. Your thoughts speak louder than words and it's time to use them wisely. Pay close attention to the negative thoughts you repeat over and over. Then do your best to reframe those thoughts in an empowering way. For instance, if you're constantly thinking, "I'll never reach my desired weight," then reframe that thought to, "I am taking powerful steps toward my desired weight." A simple shift in your thinking can create a miracle.

Zen In The City

GABRIELLE BERNSTEIN

WWW.GABBYB.TV

Gabrielle Bernstein is the author of "Spirit Junkie."

Before breakfast

Start your day off right

Don't check your email as soon as you wake up. Sit for at least one minute of stillness. Recite a positive affirmation, like, "I'm going to respect myself today," or use one of my affirmations from the Spirit Junkie Affirmation Alarm Clock (www.gabbyb.tv/spirit-junkie-app). And avoid watching the news for at least an hour. You want to detox at the beginning of the day, before the chaos sets in.

Find a resolution buddy

When you make a commitment to yourself and another person, you're more likely to stick to the plan. Find a friend who wants to be your resolution buddy. You can support each other on your path. It's even more helpful if you share the same resolution and work together to maintain the positive change.

Expand your inner awareness

All of my books and lectures have one common theme: When we strengthen our inner awareness, our outer experience becomes miraculous. This new year, accept that as you slow down and tune into your own inner guidance system, you'll receive all the power and resources you need to flourish. Stop looking outside yourself for answers. Begin a meditation practice and expand your inner awareness with my free guided meditations at www.gabbyb.tv/free-meditation.

Real, lasting change — the kind that allows you to launch and sustain the life you dream of — requires you to immerse yourself in your desires, let go of negative patterns and do it all with openness, structure and support. Happy New Year!

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No matter your field, a certificate can be a smart way to move up. / FUSE

If you're strapped for time and cash, a certificate can be the next best alternative to the long-term investment of a master's degree.

"A certificate is great for a career professional who's already experienced to some degree, looks to broaden [his or her] knowledge and seeks to understand leading practices," says Janet Rizzuto, a director of human resource studies at Cornell University's School of Industrial and Labor Relations in New York City.

Kelly Otter, associate dean of graduate affairs at Northeastern University College of Professional Studies, agrees. She says certificates work for professionals considering a master's degree but who don't know whether the area of study is right for them, or who want to switch careers.

Each school's programs and admissions processes vary; Northeastern offers brick-and-mortar as well as online classes that take about a year to complete. They don't require GMAT scores: "Rather, we place strong emphasis on previous coursework, grade point average, letters of recommendation and personal essays," says Otter.

Since most program faculty have industry experience, they teach specific skill sets using real-world examples. Cristian Gallardo, associate director of continuing education at Hunter College, explains, "In today's market, a marketing expert who also knows graphic design is a more valuable employee than the one who does not."

Added value is particularly important when jobs heavily weigh the certificate. Mohnish Sani, cofounder of CareerGlider, a site where job seekers can research skills needed for a particular career and where to acquire them, adds, "In-demand jobs like medical coding, billing and computer programming are great examples of careers that require a certificate. Tech companies usually hold certificates in specific studies in high regard because of the expertise associated with having completed a program."

VICKI SALEMI
letters@metro.us

Quoted

"A certificate is not going to be a slam dunk to get the interview. Having a certificate can give you a little more of an edge with similar candidates [without certificates] when people are deciding how to advance them."

Janet Rizzuto, Cornell University's School of Industrial and Labor Relations

By the numbers

- Eighty-seven percent of employers said their employees' levels of educational attainment positively affect their salaries.
- Seventy-eight percent of employers said additional study while employed is a factor in advancement and promotion.
- Seventy percent of employers say today's employees need continuous education and training just to keep up with their jobs.
- Sixty-two percent of general businesses, 55 percent of health care companies and nearly 70 percent of technology companies reported that it didn't matter if students were taking a class for credit or not.

Source: A survey by Destiny Solutions of health care, technology and business companies.

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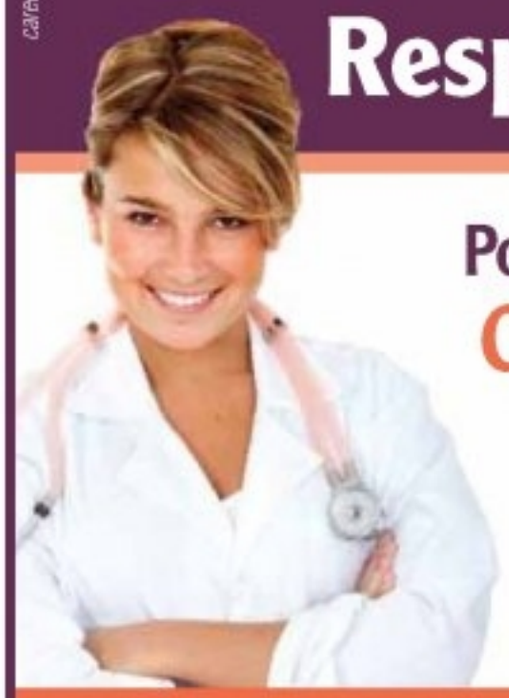

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Family. One organization is working to give girls access to the schooling they need.

VICKI SALEMI
letters@metro.us

Tammy Tibbetts is the founder and president of She's the First. PROVIDED

Want to change the world one girl at a time? Meet Amanda Parks, president of the She's the First campus chapter at The College of New Jersey. The nonprofit group sponsors girls' education in developing nations by giving them the chance to be the first in their families to graduate from secondary school.

The senior proudly proclaims, "I am and always will be an advocate for equality in girls' education."

In the countries where She's the First works, only one out of every three girls attends secondary school. Whenever Parks is stressed out, she reminds herself "of the girls we sponsor and the girls we have yet to sponsor. They are my motivation to get through long nights and stressful weeks." That motivation includes running fundraisers like their annual tie-dye cupcake bake sale, which is part of the organization's worldwide bake-off. Parks' TCNJ campus chapter raised more than $1,700 between last year and this year to send to their sponsor school in Nepal. In addition to raising money, she says these events raise awareness, add co-sponsors in other student organizations and recruit new members.

She's the First members gather for an annual leadership summit in New York City. / PROVIDED

Katie Riley, campus programs assistant at She's the First's New York office, says chapters typically include 20 to 30 students. She says the organization anticipates having about 200 chapters by the end of the school year. "The chapters promote girls' education issues via social media and host at least one awareness event (such as a panel or documentary screening) and one fundraising event per semester," says Riley.

Tammy Tibbetts, the president and founder of She's the First, says that a feeling of family is an essential part of the organization. Tibbetts, who was recently named one of Time magazine's 30 people under 30 changing the world, explains: "She's the First is not something I see students doing just to have a bullet point on their résumé. They are looking to change the world with a community."

For Parks, family is a big part of why she works with She's the First: "It is comforting to know that I have that support system whenever I need it — and when I least expect it."

By the numbers

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10
countries

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Tammy Tibbetts president and founder

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Degree. A judge has ruled that an MBA doesn't mean a tax break

For students looking to claim their MBAs as tax deductions, a recent ruling means they may be out of luck. / STOCKBYTE

The U.S. Tax Court has dealt a setback to young MBA students with little work experience who try to claim their tuition costs as a tax-deductible business expense, lawyers and accountants said last week.

In a ruling, a Florida Tax Court judge denied Adam Hart the $17,138 tax deduction he claimed for his MBA tuition costs in 2009. The IRS billed Hart for $2,572 in unpaid taxes.

Hart, now 31, who graduated in 2011 from the MBA program at Florida's Rollins College, did not have enough consistent work experience prior to starting school to claim the deduction, the judge ruled.

Claiming MBA tuition as a cost-of-business deduction is a narrow needle to thread, tax professionals said. MBA students may be able to convince the IRS their education is an expense if they have years of experience built up before starting a program, and return to that career after graduation.

Josh Nowack, an accountant in California, said he does between 30 and 50 tax returns a year that claim MBA tuition as a business expense. Students in high-tax states like New York and California can save between $5,000 and $10,000 with the MBA tax break.

He said a strong candidate for the tax break is an engineer, for example, who has worked for 15 years then got an MBA to broaden his or her career opportunities. REUTERS

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Ringtone. Put your phone down and get to work already

Your phone may rule your life, but it shouldn't rule your work. / FUSE

Your cellphone may be a key component of your daily life, but disconnecting at work is a smart move. With our professional and personal lives integrated into one device, it's difficult to draw the line between what is OK and what isn't, so here are some guidelines to help you stay on track:

Turn off all ringers and notifications: Keeping your phone from beeping or buzzing is not only less disturbing to your work, but it's more respectful to your co-workers too. Keeping alerts silenced during work hours makes it easier for everyone to pay attention to the tasks at hand.

Don't answer personal calls at the office: While at work, let your personal calls go to voice mail. If it's vital, excuse yourself from the office to take the call. Unless it's a quick question and answer, avoid personal phone calls during work hours. These calls are disruptive and unnecessarily blur the boundaries between personal time and business hours.

Talentegg.com is a job board and online career resource for college students and recent graduates.
TalentEgg
hatching graduate careers

Heads up

Don't bring your phone into meetings

You may need your phone during the meeting, and if this is the case then it's appropriate to have it on you. But if not, leave your phone at your desk. Meetings aren't lengthy, so during that time your attention needs to be solely on what is being discussed.

Wait and see

Set a 'check phone' time

Try to set a specific time to check your phone for any additional messages or alerts that may have come through while you were working. For example, you could decide that every hour or each day at 3 p.m. is when you check your device. This ensures that you won't be checking your phone every five minutes just out of habit.

Corporate jargon may not help you get ahead

Lingo. Buzzwords may sound fancy, but research shows they're not the key to moving up.

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r/ally

Are you a "thought leader" with a well-defined "elevator pitch"? If you answered yes to that question without really knowing what those terms mean, you are not alone.

Research done by Financial Times Publishing revealed that less than 10 percent of senior managers in the U.K. comprehend the real meaning of popular corporate buzzwords. Out of nearly 1,000 respondents, the majority were "quite unable" to give a correct explanation of the jargon they use each day. For example, only a quarter of those who participated in the survey understood words like "leverage," and "core competency."

Less than half of respondents understood the meaning of "paradigm shift" or were able to distinguish how "strategy" differs from "tactics" in a managerial context. Only 9 percent of the respondents were able to correctly match a list of 10 words with their meanings.

Interestingly, even executives who said they were "admittedly ignorant" of these words still used five of these terms on average per day in meetings, presentations, emails, reports and, of course, conversations. Most of them think that by doing so they appear more professional or intelligent in the eyes of others. Others believe that throwing these words around cements their position of authority.

A small number of the participants genuinely thought that they made sense when they included these terms in conversations, not realizing that they were using these words inaccurately. Some admitted to just faking it and hoped that they would not be asked to actually explain what they meant.

According to the co-authors of the study, professors Davide Sola and Jerome Couturier, corporate jargon is overused in the business world and costs U.K. businesses tens of millions of pounds annually.

"Using corporate spiel in order to appear more intelligent, or simply because it sounds 'good', is clearly not the best method of communicating a direction or message. At best, staff and colleagues are left confused or ambivalent. At worst, it costs businesses money as stakeholders are unable to understand the objective and take longer to bring projects or tasks to fruition," says Sola.

Couturier says corporate buzzwords, when used in context, can effectively communicate a vision or objective. "The trick is to use them only when applicable. If in doubt, stick to clear and simple English."

Make sure you understand what an "elevator pitch" is before trying one. / GETTY IMAGES, MOODBOARD RF

Look them up

Here is a list of 10 commonly misunderstood business buzzwords, according to the study. Make sure you understand them before you throw them around:

10. Core competency
9. Blue sky thinking
8. Strategy
7. Tactics
6. Engagement
5. Elevator pitch
4. Leverage
3. Future-proof
2. Return on involvement
1. Thought leaders

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Horoscope

♑ Capricorn | Dec. 22-Jan 20. You'll have many professional opportunities today. Deals can be settled, but be very careful when they involve loved ones.

♒ Aquarius | Jan. 21-Feb 18. Don't let your emotions lead you astray. Temptation is apparent, and strength of character will be required.

♓ Pisces | Feb. 19-March 20. Get organized. You may find yourself in an inflammatory situation, and if you cannot admit your mistakes, you will meet with roadblocks.

♈ Aries | March 21-April 20. Your emotions will be close to the surface, especially if you are goaded into a heated discussion. You must avoid saying the wrong thing.

♉ Taurus | April 21-May 21. You will have the discipline to get things done, but you will also attract a person who is more of a hindrance than a help. Don't expect others to lend a hand.

♊ Gemini | May 22-June 20. Today, you can find the momentum to get stalled projects up and running again.

♋ Cancer | June 21-July 22. Don't let anyone give you a hard time about work. You will be very serious in your endeavors.

♌ Leo | July 23-Aug. 22. Do everything you can to promote your talents. You have much to offer, and today is the perfect time to take center stage. Love is likely on your mind, but don't let it distract you.

♍ Virgo | Aug. 23-Sept. 22. A trip or a conference you attend will expand your knowledge base. You will make changes to the way you communicate.

♎ Libra | Sept. 23-Oct. 22. Someone you least suspect may turn on you. Deal with loved ones delicately, or they may react with vitriol.

♏ Scorpio | Oct. 23-Nov. 21. Issues with your partner may cause confusion, but if you refuse to be drawn in, it will pass. Concentrate on artistic or mentally challenging work.

♐ Sagittarius | Nov. 22-Dec. 21. Now is the time to implement professional changes. Take action where your work is concerned so that you can make progress. BERNICE BEDE OSOL

Sudoku: Easy and hard

	3				2		6	
8		6		7	9	2	4	
9						1	7	
		4			6			
			8	3	1			
			7			3		
	5	9						4
	6	3	1	4		5		2
	2		3				1	

			8				5	
			9		5	3		7
2		7			6	8		
	2	5			7			
9			2	5	4			3
			6			5	2	
		2	7			9		1
8		9	1		2			
	4				9			

How to play
Fill in the grid so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1-9. There is no math involved. You solve the puzzle with reasoning and logic.

Letters

Who judges the judges?

Re: 'Who needs enemies when you have the government?' (Metro, Jan. 2) Letter writer Janice Amato is afraid the American government wants to "destroy what America stands for" because of the collection of meta data by the NSA that tracks patterns of phone usage. That's Janice's opinion and it's certainly a popular one, bridging libertarians with the progressive far left.

However, her suggestion to jail a federal judge for ruling in favor of the NSA completely destroys what "America stands for." We are a nation of laws and if NSA spying violates the Constitution, the Supreme Court will determine that. Self-governance is what America stands for and if this judge made a wrong decision, it will be overturned and if his decision was correct, should we jail the five to nine Supreme Court justices who ruled in favor of the NSA?

KEVIN METZ, VIA EMAIL

Minority voices must be heard

Re: 'Those who obey the law have no fear' (Metro, Jan. 3) Letter writer John Francis Fox forgets history too easily. Ethnic, political and religious minorities across the ages — be they blacks in the old Confederacy, Christians in modern China, Occupy Wall Street here in the city and so on — were and are law-abiding citizens who suffer harassment, arrest and prosecution for the "crime" of their beliefs or simply who they are. Any judge calling such behavior legal, never mind a citizen who blindly parrots this or stands by in silence, makes a mockery of their office and the very principles this country was founded upon.

JOSEPH CONNELL, VIA EMAIL

letters@metro.us

Keep them as brief as possible, preferably under 100 words. Metro reserves the right to edit all letters. Please include your name and contact info.

Crossword

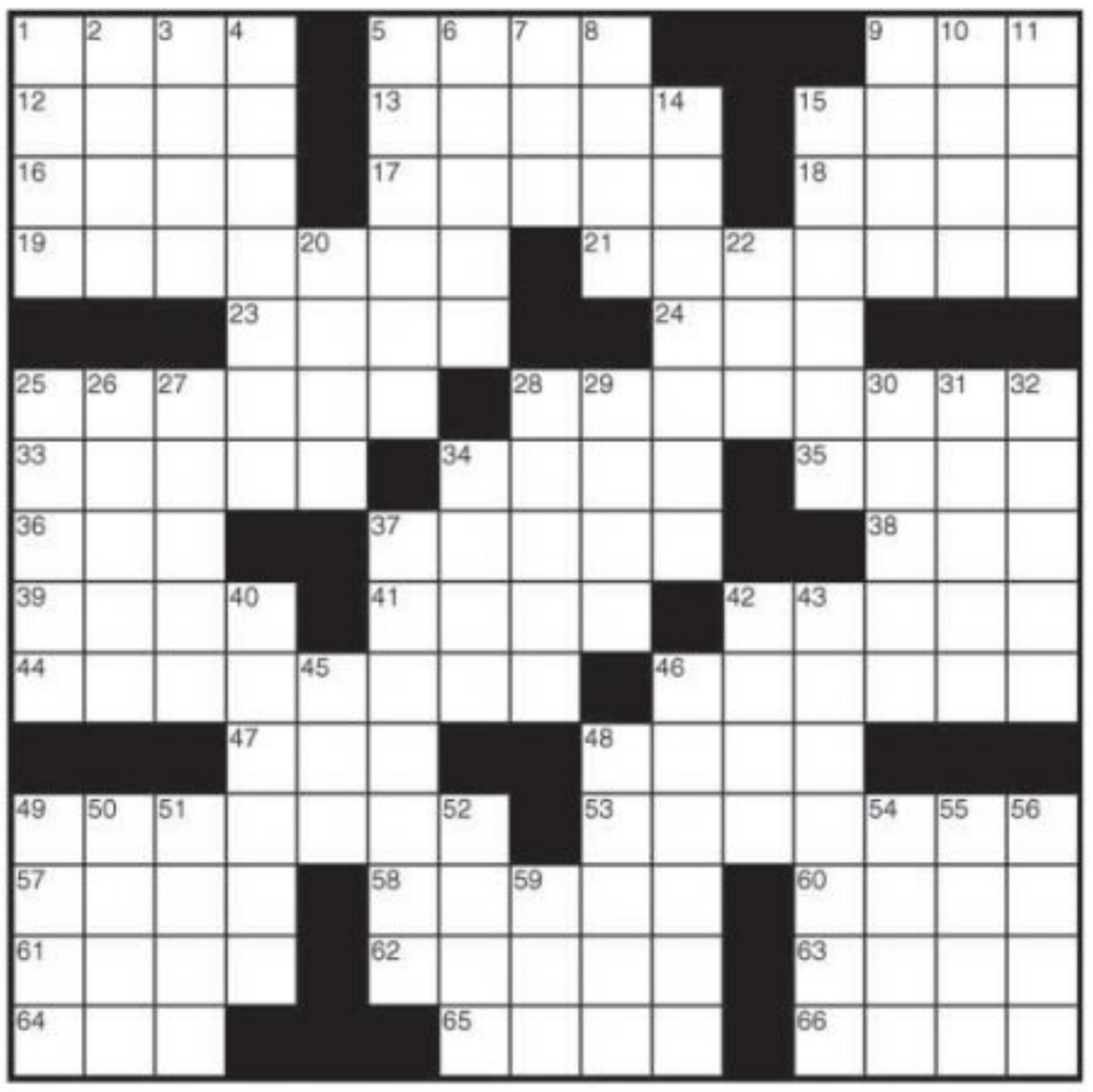
Across

1 Goody-goody
5 Ties up the phone
9 Sound of deep thought
12 Met role
13 Hodgepodges
15 Tree trunk
16 Cato's highway
17 Very very
18 Kinks' tune
19 Schedule again
21 Broke loose
23 Very pale
24 Term of endearment
25 Rights a wrong
28 Roofed with straw
33 Bamboo muncher
34 Quarry
35 — Krishna
36 Green card org.
37 Pseudonym of sorts
38 Square-dance partner
39 No, to Ivan
41 Take-charge type
42 Luau
44 Entrances
46 Art categories
47 Hack off
48 Insult wittily
49 Stuffed
53 Evening-gown fabric
57 Helm position
58 Spiral-horned antelope
60 Devers of track
61 One-name entertainer
62 Bright star in Orion
63 "Como — usted?"
64 Puppy noise
65 Smooth the way
66 Climb up a pole

Down

1 Au — (nanny)
2 Ceremony
3 "Et tu" time
4 Flower chain
5 Kids
6 Dumpster locale
7 Baby beaver
8 Tender
9 Ear dangler
10 Marseilles Ms.
11 Honey wine
14 Struts
15 Quickly boil
20 On board ship
22 Collapsible bed
25 Mocking
26 Roberts of "Charlie's Angels"
27 Beginning
28 Gives it a go
29 Get an earful
30 Comic-strip Viking
31 Remove chalk
32 Shoulder muscles
34 Clever ruse
37 Plug add-on
40 Money handler
42 — shui
43 Holds one's interest
45 Misfortune
46 Encompass
48 Territories
49 Slightly improper
50 Grades 1-12
51 Tweet
52 Mr. Wiesel
54 Punning poet
55 Rigatoni kin
56 Shepard or Greenspan
59 Turkish honorific

Weekend's answer



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3 SPORTS

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Top things we learned about the 2013 Eagles

1 Chip Kelly is not Steve Spurrier

The biggest thing we learned in 2013 is that Chip Kelly can coach at any level — high school, college, pros, pee-wee league.

It's something we probably should have realized sooner, considering Bill Belichick keeps him on speed dial.

His high-octane, zone-read offense isn't a gimmick and was a thing of beauty to watch.

Defenses were gassed trying to keep up as the Eagles set single-season records for points scored (442), total net yards (6,676), touchdowns (53) and passing yards (4,406) — all while leading the NFC in total offense (417.3 yards per game) and the entire NFL in rushing offense (160.4 yards per game).

We'll give you a minute, if you need to catch your breath.

2 LeSean McCoy is Barry Sanders

The comparisons started two seasons ago, but then Shady got injured in 2012 and the league forgot how good he was.

Not anymore. Not after breaking multiple ankles, in the snow nonetheless, en route to taking the rushing title.

His 1,607 rushing yards set a new franchise single-season record, and he became the first Eagle to win the rushing title since 1949.

He also brings a certain unexplainable swagger to the locker room, as evidenced by his blatant flaunting of a WWE Championship belt.

3 Nick Foles is the franchise

We were very skeptical of the second-year quarterback after a shaky 2012.

We were wrong. He was neck-and-neck with Mike Vick in the pre-season and handled losing the starting job with class. When his number was finally called, Foles ran the offense like a surgeon. He set single-season franchise marks in QB rating (119.2), completion percentage (64.04) and interception percentage (0.63), and chucked seven touchdowns against Oakland. Scary good.

It's going to be fun to watch Foles go into 2014 as the unquestioned leader.

4 The defense is actually good

It was supposed to be a long adjustment period switching over to Billy Davis' complex 3-4 hybrid scheme.

Remember, this was a dismal unit in 2012, one that couldn't get out of its own way and surrendered a league-worst 33 touchdowns through the air.

Many players struggled with it early on, especially sack-master Trent Cole and safety Nate Allen.

However, the defense bought into Davis' system and was one big stop away from preserving a playoff win. Their plus-12 turnover ratio ranked No. 2 in the NFL.

MICHAEL GREGER
michael.greger@metro.us

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Deciding on several key free agents

The Eagles front office staff will be faced with a bevy of tough decisions this offseason.

- **Jeremy Maclin, WR**
Macklin may be a bargain this season. After a torn ACL forced him to miss all of 2013, the receiver will need to prove he can play in 2014. Maclin had been coming off his second-best statistical season in 2012, when he hauled in 69 balls for 857 yards and seven touchdowns, and was poised for a breakout 2013.

- **Riley Cooper, WR**
Cooper was the second-best receiving weapon on the Eagles, with 47 receptions for 835 yards and eight touchdowns. Hard to believe after his tumultuous summer, when half of Philadelphia wanted him cut outright for his use of a racial slur. But his size and length proved invaluable on short slants, in the blocking game and especially down in the red zone.

- **Nate Allen, safety**
The fourth-year safety was the early season poster boy for poor draft choices during the Andy Reid era. In Week 2, he was literally run over by the Chargers on the ground and exploited over the top on big passing plays. He looked lost in coverage and unprepared to make game-saving tackles. But by season's end, he was one of the best players on the Eagles defense. With question marks at the other safety spot — Patrick Chung was a disaster, Earl Wolff showed flashes — it looks like Allen has played himself into a new contract.

- **Michael Vick, QB**
Vick won't get the starting job here — that ship has sailed. The question is, is there another NFL team willing to give him a shot as a starting quarterback? His only hope is that a team wants some cheap publicity (Raiders? Redskins?), or maybe he can turn into a reliable backup. The latter would be an intriguing option for the Eagles considering the abysmal play of rookie Matt Barkley. **MIKE GREGER**

Eagles owner Jeffrey Lurie got his man in Chip Kelly, and the first-year coach gave the Birds a six-win improvement. / GETTY IMAGES

Lurie feels he got it right with Kelly pick

NFL. The Eagles owner's gamble on the unproven Oregon coach led to immediate results.

Eagles owner Jeffrey Lurie's lusting after Chip Kelly was the worst kept secret in football. When he finally fired Andy Reid, there was only one man he wanted to hire.

The Eagles owner had been tracking Kelly's innovations at Oregon ever since being throttled by Cincinnati 34-13 during the 2012 season. Everyone knew it. He just had to sell it to a skeptical fan base.

Kelly took care of all that by exceeding all expectations, leading the Eagles on a wild ride through the NFC East, including the team's first division title since 2010. Even after a heartbreaking 26-24 loss to New Orleans in the playoffs, it's hard not to applaud Lurie's vision.

"This is just the tip of the iceberg," said Lurie. "I think that everyone in this room knows it. I was incredibly impressed by how quickly Chip and his staff were able to get this group together and perform extremely well."

The Eagles were left in abysmal shape when Reid left. The defense ranked among the NFL's worst. There was instability at the quarterback position.

They weren't shouldering nearly enough of the load on their franchise running back, LeSean McCoy. In his rookie season — his first ever coaching at the professional level — Kelly has seemingly fixed all that, just as quickly as his uptempo offense gets to the line of scrimmage and runs a play.

"It's not just about his X's and O's, we know it's pretty dynamic," Lurie said. "But, his ability to rally and bring people together for a common cause is very impressive and is going to serve us great starting next year."

MICHAEL GREGER
michael.greger@metro.us

Kelly thanks players

Eagles coach proud of team despite loss in playoff opener

Head coach Chip Kelly thanked his players for buying into his system. It wasn't always easy, but the results are undeniable. His one-word message to the guys was pride.

"I just told them I was proud of them," Kelly said. "For us being together for such a short amount of time, how they acted and how they came to work every single day; as a staff, how much we appreciated them, how they made this, from a work environment standpoint, a really special feeling every single day when you go the NovaCare Complex, and just thanked them for that."

As owner Jeff Lurie stated, it's the tip of the iceberg. With a franchise quarterback firmly in place, along with an ever-improving defense and some of the best skill players in the entire league, the sky isn't falling in Philadelphia. If anything, the Eagles are the sky.

"This year we had a young team and they were just finding out how good they were," said Lurie. "I think if we can get a first-round bye next year, that would be the goal. I think we will aim to win the division and get a bye."

MIKE GREGER

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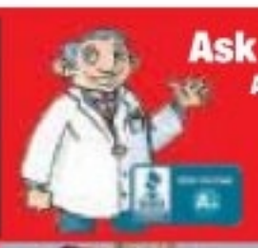

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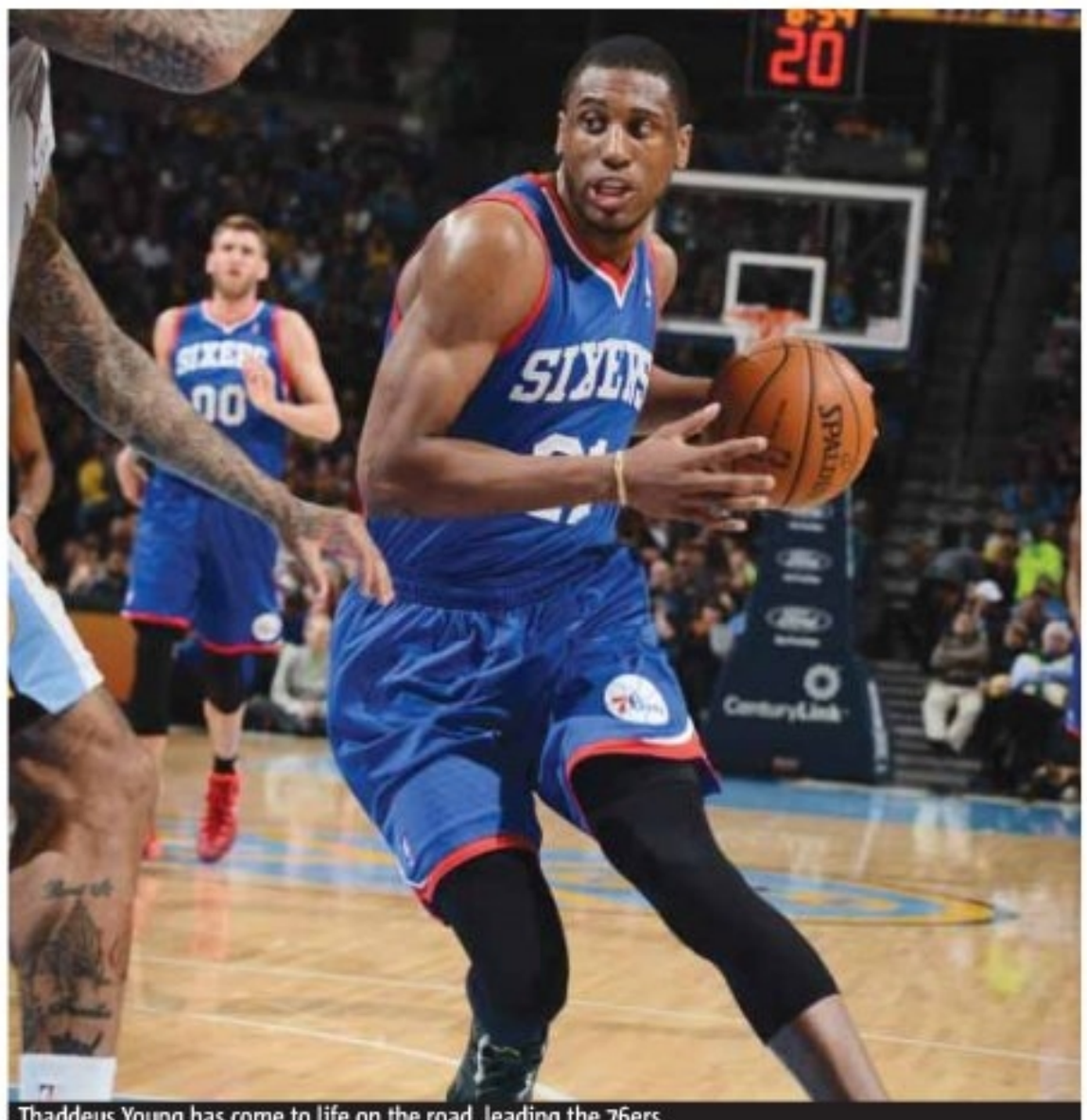
Thaddeus Young has come to life on the road, leading the 76ers to a 4-2 road trip in the perilous western conference. / GETTY IMAGES

Young plays like All-Star

NBA. Thaddeus Young shrugs off trade rumors, and leads Sixers to four straight wins.

About two weeks ago, a published report intimated that Thaddeus Young had asked the 76ers for a trade.

Young flatly denied the information.

He said as long as he remains a member of the Sixers, he'll play the only way he knows how — with intensity, passion and determination.

At the time, the Sixers were struggling. They continued to struggle until venturing on their annual road trip out West.

But Young kept pushing, just like he promised.

Over the last four games — a mind-boggling four-game winning streak at Los Angeles, Denver, Sacramento and Portland — Young has been performing at an All-Star level.

Young had 25 points and nine rebounds against the Lakers, 17 points and 10 rebounds at Denver, 28 points at Sacramento and a season-high tying 30 points at Portland on Saturday night.

The unlikely surge pushed the Sixers' record to 12-21. They're incredibly just five games out of first place in the Atlantic Division.

No one saw this coming.

Young saw a young team growing every day in practice. And he wasn't going to change the way he prepared.

"At the end of the day, like I said, I'm here, ready to go, 110 percent — ready to give it my all, each and every night," Young said at the time. "That's my makeup. My makeup is to go out there and continue to be a professional and continue to be a basketball player and continue to work hard for this city. If they see fit to trade me, then hey, I have to pack up my family, be ready to go, wife and kids, and move on to the next city.

"But at the end of the day, I'm here — here to play for this city, here to play for this team and ready to go out there and help my teammates win a basketball game."

That he has.

Young is the longest-tenured player on the Sixers. He's playing for his fifth coach, and Brett Brown is definitely getting the most out of his ever-improving forward.

West Coast winter

26.67

Points per game averaged by Thaddeus Young during the 76ers' six-game road trip (4-2). He also averaged nearly nine rebounds per game during the same span.

ANDY JASNER
sports@metro.us

Chargers pull upset, Niners win on kick

NFL. Both road teams won in harsh environments, with the 49ers walking off with a win.

Colin Kaepernick managed to stay warm enough to throw for 227 yards and a touchdown. / GETTY IMAGES

It was a day for the road teams on wild-card Sunday.

The second half of wild-card weekend broke out with an upset in the opener and a wild win in the finale.

Chargers 27, Bengals 10
San Diego may have just snuck into the playoffs, but they had no problem upsetting the seven-point favorite Bengals on the road. Philip Rivers played an error-free game, while his counterpart Andy Dalton threw two interceptions and lost a fumble. Ronnie Brown, Danny Woodhead and Ryan Mathews all had at least 50 yards rushing for the Chargers.

49ers 23, Packers 20
San Francisco rallied for a walk-off win in Lambeau Field, where the wind chill hovered around minus-10 all game. Phil Dawson kicked a 33-yard game-winning field goal as the clock ran out to send the Niners to the next round. The Packers had tied the game at 20-20 on a field goal with 5:06 left.

MARK OSBORNE
mark.osborne@metro.us

Divisional round

Next weekend's games feature two No. 6 seeds and four of the best young quarterbacks in the NFL:

- **Saints at Seahawks**
  Jan. 11, 4:35 p.m., FOX
  The road just gets tougher for Drew Brees and company.
- **Colts at Patriots**
  Jan. 11, 8:15 p.m., CBS
  Andrew Luck will be welcomed to real postseason play.
- **49ers at Panthers**
  Jan. 12, 1:05 p.m., FOX
  Colin Kaepernick and Cam Newton meet in a battle of option QBs.
- **Chargers at Broncos**
  Jan. 12, 4:40 p.m., CBS
  The Chargers already won at Denver, 27-20, in Week 15.

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